

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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HEW-06 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01  
SCSE-00 USIA-15 EB-08 IO-13 ORM-02 /075 W  
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R 231300Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2351

UNCLAS BUCHAREST 2140

FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF (OFDA)

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SWEL, EAID, RO  
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN EARTHQUAKE: DAMAGE OUTSIDE BUCHAREST

1. SUMMARY: WISHING TO HAVE SOME FIRSTHAND SENSE OF EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE OUTSIDE BUCHAREST, SEVERAL OF US VISITED CRAIOVA, THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OF OLTENIA, ON MARCH 22. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS OF MORE EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO HOUSING THAN WE HAD ANTICIPATED. PARTY FIRST SECRETARY SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT JUDET'S INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL WOULD RECOVER QUICKLY AND THAT 1977 GOALS WOULD BE MET. HIS FIRST PRIORITY IS TO PROVIDE NEW HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS WHICH HE SEES AS MUCH LONGER TERM TASK. WE ALSO SAW BRIEFLY SOME OF THE DAMAGE IN OTHER TOWNS SOUTHEAST OF BUCHAREST. END SUMMARY.

2. WE WERE MET IN CRAIOVA, AN INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL

OF DOLJ JUDET (COUNTY), BY THE FIRST SECRETARY AND GIVEN A TWO-HOUR TOUR OF THE MOST AFFECTED PARTS OF THE CITY BY THE PARTY CULTURAL SECRETARY. UNLIKE  
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BUCHAREST WHERE GENERALLY ONE-STORY DETACHED HOMES SUFFERED LEAST FROM THE EARTHQUAKE, A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF CRAIOVA'S SINGLE STORY STRUCTURES ARE EITHER COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED OR BEYOND REPAIR. WE SAW AT LEAST TEN STREETS WHOSE HOUSES ON BOTH SIDES HAD BEEN REDUCED TO RUBBLES. MOST OF THESE STRUCTURES WERE ABOUT 50 YEARS OLD, HAD ALREADY

BEEN AFFECTED BY THE 1940 EARTHQUAKE AND HAD NOT BEEN BUILT TO EARTHQUAKE RESISTANT STANDARDS. A PECULIARITY OF THE MARCH 4 QUAKE IS THAT PARALLEL STREETS ONE BLOCK AWAY FROM THOSE MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED SEEMED TO HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE DAMAGE.

3. MANY SCHOOLS NEED MAJOR REPAIRS BEFORE THEY CAN AGAIN RECEIVE STUDENTS; 67 PERCENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS, ACCORDING TO OUR GUIDE, HAVE BEEN DAMAGED. WE VISITED THE TRAINING (HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL) SCHOOL FOR "ELECTROPUTERE," THE CITY'S SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE FOR 3200 STUDENTS, HALF OF WHOM HAD BEEN HOUSED IN DORMS THAT ARE NOW UNSAFE BECAUSE OF DAMAGED FOUNDATIONS THE SCHOOL'S DINING HALL HAD BEEN MDE INTO A DORMITORY WHERE PUPILS SELPT TWO TO A COT. WE WERE TOLD IT COULD WELL TAKE TWO YEARS BEFORE THE DORMITORY HOUSING SITUATION (CRAIOVA'S UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL HAVE LARGE NUMBERS OF BOARDING STUDENTS) WOULD BE NORMAL. MANY HISTORICAL AND GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS HAVE HAD TO BE CLOSED, INCLUDING THE CITY'S RENOWNED ART MUSEUM, WHICH WE VISITED, AND PARTS OF THE IMPOSING COUNTY HEADQUARTERS.

4. ACCORDING TO THE FIRST SECRETARY, EIGHT OF THE JUDET'S MAJOR INDUSTRIAL UNITS HAD BEEN AFFECTED AND THREE ARE STILL SHUT DOWN. THE MOST IMPORTANT, IN ELECTRICAL, CLOTHING, AND CHEMICAL SECTORS, WERE UNCLASSIFIED

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ONLY AFFECTED TEMPORARILY AND ARE BACK ON A NORMAL SCHEDULE. THANKS TO EXPRA PRODUCTION IN OTHER ENTERPRISES AND TO SUNDAY SHIFTS, HE EXPECTS THE COUNTY'S SHORTFALL OF 10 MILLION LEI TO BE MADE UP BY MONTH'S END, ADMITTEDLY NOT ALL OF IT IN PLANNED SECTORS.

5. WE DROVE THROUGH OTHER TOWNS IN TELEORMAN JUDET DURING THIS TRIP AND MADE THE FOLLOWING ADMITTEDLY QUICK OBSERVATIONS BASED LARGELY ON TOWN CENTERS.

A. ROSIORI DE VEDE - AN ENTIRE BLOCK IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN IS COMPLETELY DESTROYED AND SEVERAL OTHERS LOOK LIKELY TO BE DEMOLISHED.

B. ALEXANDRIA - MINOR DAMAGE

C. CARACAL - SERIOUS DAMAGE IN SEVERAL PART OF TOWN.

D. TURNU MAGURELE - MINOR DAMAGE INCLUDING  
ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL.

E. ZIMNICEA - THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATE THAT 80  
PERCENT OF THE TOWN HAD BEEN DEMOLISHED AND THAT THE  
ENTIRE TOWN WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPLETELY REBUILT SEEMS  
EXAGGERATED BUT NOT VERY MUCH. FOUR SQUARE BLOCKS  
IN THE CENTER OF THE TOWN WHERE, WE WERE ASSURED,  
THERE HAD BEEN HOUSES, ARE NOW EMPTY LOTS; ALL THE  
RUBBLE HAS BEEN REMOVED. WE SAW AT LEAST FOUR  
OTHER SIMILAR BLOCKS IN OTHER PARTS OF TOWN.

6. IT IS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE THE EXTENSIVE  
DESTRUCTION WE SAW ON THIS TRIP WITH THE FIGURE OF  
ONLY 40 DEAD IN THE TOWN OF CRAIOVA AND ONLY 41  
FOR THE ENTIRE DOLJ JUDET. THE NUMBERS OF WOUNDED  
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IN CRAIOVA RAN ABOUT 500, OF WHOM ABOUT A HUNDRED  
ARE SAID TO BE STILL HOSPITALIZED. THE MOST  
IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IS TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS. THIS  
YEAR'S PLAN HAD CALLED FOR 4,000 DWELLING UNITS. WITH 7,000  
FAMILIES (MOSTLY IN CRAIOVA) (OUT OF A POPULATION  
OF ABOUT 200,000) RENEDED HOMELESS AT LEAST FOR A  
TIME, THE FIRST SECRETARY ESTIMATES THIS YEAR'S  
NEEDS AS 8,000 BUT EXPECTS, IF EVERYTHING GOES WELL,  
TO HAVE ONLY 5,200 COMPLETED. THE NEED TO SURVEY BUILD-  
INGS THOROUGHLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY CAN BE  
REPAIRED TO MEET NEW EARTHQUAKE RESISTANT STANDARDS  
MEANS NECESSARY DELAYS IN DECISIONS. HENCE  
THE JUDET AUTHORITIES ARE CONCENTRATING ON FINDING  
TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS WHICH WILL IN FACT HAVE TO BE OF  
SOME DURATION. SCHOOLS, FACTORIES AND GOVERNMENT  
BUILDINGS ARE BEING USED AS DORMITORIES, BUT THE  
PROBLEM IS FURTHER COMPLICATED, AS ILLUSTRATED  
DURING OUR VISIT, BY THE FACT THAT DAMAGED HOUSES  
CONTINUE TO COLLAPSE EVEN BEFORE THEY CAN BE  
DEMOLISHED. EVEN IN VIEW OF THE FIRST SECRETARY'S  
RATHER OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK THAT ADEQUATE (MORE THAN  
MAKESHIFT) SHELTER CAN BE FOUND BEFORE NEXT WINTER, IT IS  
CLEAR THAT THE TASK IS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT. IN SPITE OF THE  
DETERMINED ATTITUDE OF THE JUDET'S LEADERSHIP THAT  
PRODUCTION GOALS WILL BE MET, WE ALSO  
WONDER WHETHER THEY ARE NOT UNDERESTIMATING THE  
CONTINUING EFFECT ON OURPUT OF WORKER MORALE IN SUCH A  
SITUATION ON OUTPUT.

7. THOUGH WE WERE SEVERAL HOURS AWAY  
FROM BUCHAREST, THAT PART OF THE EARTHQUAKE

EXERIENCE WAS BROUGHT HOME TO US AGAIN VIVIDLY BY  
A CHANCE MEETING WITH A CENTRAL COMMITTEE ENGINEER  
WHO HAD SUPERVISED THE RESCUE OPERATIONS AT ONE  
OF THE HIGHRISES WHICH COLLAPSED NOT FAR FROM THE  
EMBASSY AND FROM WHICH ONLY TEN OUT OF TWO HUNDRED  
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PERSONS IN THE BUILDING SURVIVED.  
BARNES

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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